

WHOLE HEALTH NEWSLETTER

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

Spring 2021 Vol. 2, edition 3

Live Whole Health

Wild Geese

by Mary Oliver

**You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your
knees for a hundred miles through
the desert, repenting.**

**You only have to let the soft
animal of your body love what
it loves.**

**Tell me about despair, yours, and
I will tell you mine.**

**Meanwhile, the world goes on.
Meanwhile, the sun and the clear
pebbles of the rain are moving
across the landscapes, over the
prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.**

**Meanwhile, the wild geese high in
the clean blue air, are heading
home again.**

**Whoever you are, no matter how
lonely, the world offers itself to your
imagination, calls to you like the
wild geese, harsh and exciting over
and over announcing your place in
the family of things.**



Message from the Whole Health Program Manager, Laurie Reisman, LCSW.

These times have been brutal and relentless for many of us and I, therefore, hope that this newsletter finds you in a state of calm, clarity and peace. If not, that's OK; rest assured that you are not alone. Whole Health is here to support you to regain your footing, build community and connect to what matters to you. Spring is a time to re-discover the seeds of passion that have often been planted and sometimes buried deeply within. As we examine our surroundings this month, as flowers bloom and baby birds chirp, we recognize that nature can be harsh and beautiful all at once. Nature is to be respected at the highest levels, as this is an area in which it is easy to see how much we don't have control around things outside of ourselves. Nature helps me to surrender and come home to myself in such a crucial way. If I'm having a hard day and feeling stress, it is generally the connection to walking on the earth, looking at the clouds,

the sun, or the moon that help to ground me and find inner presence. That inner peace is always with in me; however, it is often masked by daily stressors. Nature is the conduit through which to reconnect. If I was planning a walk, and thunder and rain decide to come, that is my opportunity to pray for the grace to surrender to what is and to relax into the sound of the pelting rain as I breathe through my day.

Please take some time to notice how resilient you are. Notice all the little ways that you take care of yourself and have come to survive and arrive at this very day. This is your time! It is a time to access your creativity and joy and to access what is fresh and new within. Perhaps you have been living a life of trying to please others or living with fear based on the past. Perhaps your mind keeps you in turmoil. Once again, you're not alone. It's all part of the human condition. Thank Goodness that we have some tools and a pathway forward to support us to make choices in line with our values and to connect to our souls

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(continued from page 1)

calling! What seeds have been planted in your soul that are just waiting for an opportunity to sprout? Please check out the Whole Health page on the NF/SG VHA website and contact a Whole Health Coach to support you on your journey!

https://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/services/Whole_Health.asp

You can also access a Whole Health Coach through your Primary Care Physician.

***“And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.”***

—T.S. Elliot



VETERAN SUCCESS STORY

BARRY HINSON

I started my journey with Whole Health Coaching in January of 2020. I was previously homeless and living in a shed with an electrical cord running to it from a power source. I was eating whatever I could afford on \$500 a month and purchase at the nearest store. My choices were limited because I had no where to store the food or cook it.

I started with Whole Health Coaching as a warm handoff from a nurse. I had no clue what it was about. Through Whole Health Coaching and becoming aware of my strengths and being able to set small goals, I am now renting a room in a house.

I started walking and to date have walked 55 miles this year. I have also lost 20 pounds and a pants size. I keep a log of the miles that I walk and restarted it on January 1, 2021. I look forward to the goals I will make in the future for my health.

—Barry Hinson, US Marine Corp Veteran

NEW! LIVE WHOLE HEALTH APP AVAILABLE NOW!

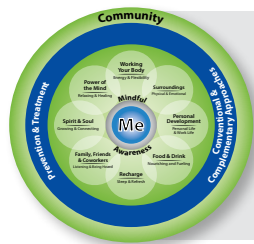
VA's new Live Whole Health app was designed to invite all Veterans to consider what matters most to them and then take the next step in personal health planning. The app has easy-to-use features that will help you stay on track and achieve your health and well-being goals. The app is available on both Android and Apple devices. Read the latest Whole Health Feature Story to learn more. The road to better health and well-being starts here. Download today! [Live Whole Health app](#)

***“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember,
you have within you the strength, the patience, and the
passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”***

Harriet Tubman

Whole Health

Circle of Health



“It was only from an inner calm that man was able to discover and shape calm surroundings.”

Stephen Gardiner

WHOLE HEALTH: SURROUNDINGS

The universe is mysterious, dynamic and beautiful, but it can create havoc in our lives. We do not have control of nature, but we do have control in the creation of a healing environment — internally within ourselves and externally. Humans, through perseverance, strength and courage, have survived over the generations because we are closely attuned to the world around us.

Surroundings is an important aspect of self-care in the Circle of Health and research illustrates that one's surroundings can affect one's health and well-being. Some subject matter related to Surroundings include our home, our workplace, our neighborhood, the climate, a safe environment free of toxins, and experiences that affect our emotions.

Be mindfully aware that one's internal surroundings — emotions — can influence one's emotional well-being. Our emotions can influence our surroundings and our external surroundings can influence emotions. Harmony and health ensue when internal and external surroundings are balanced within the concept of Whole Health – Circle of Health with emphasis on self-care, mindful awareness, and healthy lifestyle choices. Enhancing mindful awareness can improve all aspects of our life, especially self-care.

How we relate to our surroundings can affect how happy or sad we feel and encourage or discourage healthy habits.

The resources offered below can help to better understand how your surroundings affect your health and well-being.

Reference:

Bhuaneshwari Seenauth, RN PACT Care Coordinator,
Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic, University Blvd

Whole Health-Surroundings Handouts:

[Whole Health: Surroundings \(brightcove.net\)](https://www.brightcove.net)

[Assessing Your Surroundings](#)

[Toxins and Your Health](#)

[Toxins and Environmental Inflammation](#)

[Eating to Reduce Inflammation](#)

[Improve Your Health by Removing Toxins from Your Body](#)

[Ergonomics: Positioning Your Body for Whole Health](#)

[Create a Gratitude Practice](#)

[Laughter Heals](#)

[Forgiveness](#)

[Workaholicism](#)

[Too Much Bad News: How to do an Information Fast](#)

[The Healing Power of Hope and Optimism](#)

References:

[Surroundings - Whole Health \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov)

[Surroundings - Whole Health Library \(va.gov\)](#)

MUSIC THERAPY

This quarter, our Complementary Integrative Health (CIH) modality is an area most of us don't think about. We are going to talk about Music Therapy.

The Gainesville clinic has a Creative Arts Therapy department located in Physical Medicine and Rehab, under the Rural Veterans TeleRehabilitation Initiative (RVTRI). Currently, they offer Art Therapy and Music Therapy on an individual outpatient basis.

Drama Therapy is coming soon for outpatients and based at the Lake City Clinic. Drama therapy is currently available to Community Living Center (CLC) inpatients and transgender patients. More information will be available when it can be offered on an outpatient basis. It is recommended that each Veteran referred to the clinic starts with one of these therapies first, but after starting with one, they may participate in more than one therapy at a time.

Music Therapy is provided by Diane Langston, a nationally board-certified music therapist (MT-BC). It is available to everyone currently receiving care at any of our clinics in the North Florida South Georgia area. Music therapy is based out of the Gainesville clinic and is also available via the VA Video Connect platform, making it more convenient and accessible to Veterans living in rural and remote areas or who may not be able to come into the GNV VA on a weekly basis. It is available to all age groups and you do not need to be service connected to take advantage of it.

Music Therapy can benefit everyone. It started in the 1940s–1950s in military hospitals, but did not become a standardized, evidence-based practice until the 1980s. There have been many studies documenting that it is an effective complementary therapy. Music Therapy is not a series of music lessons. It is a therapy all about functionality and personally tailored treatment goals. It helps Veterans to address symptoms in regard to any physical, emotional or mental health diagnoses, using music and music techniques as the modality. The first visit with a Music Therapist consists of an evaluation to assess the goals and needs of the Veteran. After that, the treatment plan will be developed to address the individual's needs.

Music Therapy can help with cognitive, memory and emotional issues, and can help with physical problems, pain management and stress reduction along with many other issues. Family members are allowed to be included in music therapy sessions, if the Veteran desires.

Any Veteran who would like to participate in the Creative Arts Therapy Clinic must have a consult placed. Any provider in the system can do this. If you are a provider, the following is how you would submit a consult, “Routine/Stat Consults” à “PM & RS” à Under *Order Telemedicine PM & RS Consult “Telemedicine” à Under Telemedicine -PM & RS “TH Rural Veterans Rehabilitation” à “RVTRI Creative Arts Therapy Evaluation.”

Debby Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach-The Village

JUST BREATHE

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF BREATH

Our bodies are marvelously capable of helping us to adapt to changes in the environment. We are all born with a complex nervous system that helps us to adapt. For example, when we need to go all-out (say, to outrun a bear encountered during a stroll in the woods), our sympathetic nervous system activates, giving us the strength and speed necessary to get to safety. Considering that most of us would list things like paying bills, dealing with teenagers, or worrying about aging parents as primary stressors, it's clear that most of our stressors are not the life-threatening sort that a bear presents! Yet our nervous system does not see a major distinction between these types of stressors. For most of us, stress is chronic, and it is stress itself that can pose a threat to our health. Chronic stress elevates our blood pressure, creates tension in our muscles, causes us to put on weight (particularly around the abdomen), and puts us at risk for diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and many other ailments. Chronic stress can suppress our immune system and cause inflammation, giving viruses more opportunity to make us sick and making it more difficult for the body to repair itself.

What has all this got to do with our breath? Have you ever thought about why we commonly use expressions such as “sigh of relief,” “breathless with anticipation,” “a breath-taking sunset,” etc.? Our language often reveals deep truths about the relationship of our emotional and physiological states to the simple, involuntary act of breathing. Most of us are aware that our breathing changes when we exercise, when we're falling asleep, or when we are startled. We tend to think of the breath as a reaction to things happening around us, and it's certainly true that our respiration — much like our blood pressure and heart rate — can be a reflection of our mood state. The breath can do so much to transform our mood and enhance our well-being.

One of the most important nerves in the body is the vagus nerve. This nerve helps regulate many functions including digestion, heart rate, and reflexes such as coughing or sneezing. Practicing slow, deep breathing sends a message to your body via

the vagus nerve that it's time to relax and de-stress, which leads to long-term improvements in mood, well-being and resilience. Here are 3 ways to utilize your breath to activate your relaxation response and transform not only your mood, but your health.

1. Alternate nostril breathing: This is an ancient technique known to yoga practitioners. To begin, sit tall with your back supported. Inhale slowly, feeling your belly expand. Gently close your right nostril with your right thumb as you slowly exhale through your left nostril. Keeping the right nostril closed, then inhale through the left nostril. Close the left nostril and repeat this pattern for 5–10 rounds.

2. Soft belly breathing: Sit or lay down and close your eyes. Slowly draw your breath in, visualizing the air as being pulled into your body from the bottom of your belly. Place your hands on your stomach. Quietly whisper (or think) “Soft,” as you inhale. Notice your belly rise and round as you inhale. Slowly exhale, whispering or thinking, “Belly.” Try this for 5 minutes to start.

3. Ujjayi breath: Sometimes called “ocean breath” or “victorious breath,” this practice can simultaneously be soothing and energizing. Sitting or lying down, inhale through your nose, slowly, from the bottom of your belly. Exhale audibly through your nose, creating a sound similar to the waves crashing on the beach (or, as some joke, like Darth Vader!).

For more resources and exercises to try, reach out to your Whole Health team or check out one of these links:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response>

<https://www.yogajournal.com/how-to/breathing-for-relaxation/>

Robin O'Hearn, PHD

SPICE: CINNAMON

Cinnamon is a popular spice found in all sorts of recipes and baked goods; therefore, it can be used in sweet or savory dishes. Cinnamon's distinctive fragrance comes from a compound called cinnamaldehyde, which is also responsible for cinnamon's health benefits. Cinnamon contains large amounts of highly potent polyphenol antioxidants, which helps fight inflammation and has been shown to lower cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood, according to Healthline research.



Cinnamon may improve some key risk factors for heart disease, including cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure. However, more research is needed to confirm cinnamon's benefits.

*People should never use cinnamon in any form as a replacement for medical treatment. People should always speak with their doctors before making any changes. Remember that good nutrition is not about focusing on any one food or nutrient above all others. It is about balance: consuming a variety of foods and getting a balance of all kinds of different nutrients.

[Gathered information from: Healthline and Medical News Today.]

Patricia Granberry, LPN Whole Health Coach-Gainesville

"The secret to good health for both the mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or to anticipate trouble, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly." **Buddha**

The **NFSGVHS Chaplain Service** would like you to know that VA Chaplains are available to you for spiritual and pastoral support. Our desire is to care for our Veterans, their families and our staff members alike. We are here to listen and encourage, offer comfort and hope, provide prayer and emotional support, and promote a sense of peace. In the Gainesville and Lake City VA Medical Centers, you have 24/7 access to our Chapels for prayer, meditation or to simply sit in a quiet place. Our offices are located nearby if you would like to talk. Please feel free to call us or drop-in at your convenience. We have Chaplain availability at JOPC and also virtually at all other OPCs and CBOC's. We want you to know that we are here for you!

Email: VHANFL Chaplain Service

GV VAMC: 352-548-7427

LC VAMC: 386-755-3016 x392125

JOPC: 904-475-6381



Mexican Avocado Chocolate Pudding

Prep: 10 in, Cook: 25 min, Total:35 min., Yield: 4 Servings. Serving Size: 1/2 cup.

Ingredients

3 Haas avocados
2/3 cup cocoa powder
1/2 cup of monk fruit powdered
sweetener or stevia
1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or
more, to thin to preferred thickness
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon chili powder

Directions

1. Cut open the avocados carefully, around the pit in the center. Remove the pit and use a spoon to scoop out the flesh into a food processor bowl.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients to the food processor and process until very smooth. (With some food processors, you'll need to stop and scrape the sides down until all the avocados have been processed into a smooth, consistent, creamy texture.)
3. Add additional sweetener or almond milk, to taste. Keep chilled.

Yield: 4 servings, 2/3 cup each.

Recipe notes

You can substitute the monk fruit sweetener for any other sweetener of choice.

The amount of sweetener called for makes a very lightly sweetened pudding, so feel free to add an additional 2–4 tablespoons.

Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.

Nutrition facts per serving:

260 calories, 22g fat, 20g carbohydrates, 13g protein, 5g fiber, 36mg sodium

Submitted by Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N, Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian



Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program for Veterans

The NF/SG VA offers many different interactive, nutrition education classes under the Healthy Teaching Kitchen program that focus on teaching Veterans how to apply nutrition education to their own living situations. All classes are currently offered online through VVC, but will resume face-to-face once it is deemed safe. Classes cover everything from food selection, shopping and meal planning, to cooking strategy, techniques, food safety, flavor balancing, nutrient content and more. For a current copy of our Healthy Teaching Kitchen class schedule, contact Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N on Secure messaging or at 352-548-6630.

Employee Wellness Healthy Teaching Kitchen: Whole Health Bites

For more nutrition tidbits and recipes, tune in for our upcoming Employee Wellness HTK Whole Health Bites Series on April 7, 14 and 21 at 12:00 (noon) EST on Microsoft Teams. Keep an eye out for the invite in your email. For more information, contact the Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian, Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N for more information or with any questions.

National Whole Health Resources:

The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats Veterans so they can take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest. Whole Health starts with a simple question: What matters to you?

Download the [Live Whole Health app](#) to manage your Whole Health journey anytime, anyplace. The [Whole Health website](#) is a great place to start your Whole Health journey.

Check out the [#LiveWholeHealth blog series](#)

The Pathway to Whole Health: <https://youtu.be/OnkO-3PA29c>

Adopting Whole Health:

<https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/docs/VA-OPCC-AdoptingWholeHealth-PhotoEssay-508.pdf>

Resources for Homeless Veterans

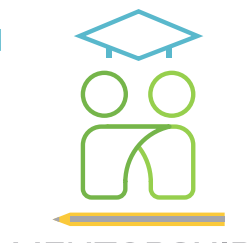
- Information on homelessness programs and initiatives through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Has a helpline available to support Veterans needing homelessness resources and support. Contact at 1-800-VET-HELP or 1-800-838-4357.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Aid Line. Contact at 1-877-4AI-DVET or 1-877-424-3838.

Peer Support Message:

One of the most important things for me while I was healing from trauma was to have a place where I felt safe and comfortable. Soft lighting and warm colors in my home felt like a big hug on difficult days during trauma therapy. Having things clean, organized and not too cluttered reduced feelings of anxiety. It was important to feel safe and relaxed and having smells that reminded me of good times, like cinnamon or lavender also helped. Going through difficult feelings and emotions are a part of the healing process but I found things to make life a little easier on those not so good days. Taking Charge of My Life and Health groups have tools like these and many more. If you are interested in attending feel free to reach out to me.



SHOWING



MENTORSHIP



Wendy Skinner
*Peer Support, at the
Gainesville Primary Care clinic.*

DBT Wise Mind to Manage Emotional Distress

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) combines cognitive and behavioral therapy, incorporating methodologies from various practices including Eastern mindfulness techniques. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) uses the concept of a reasonable, emotional, and wise mind to describe a person's thoughts and behaviors. Each person possesses each of these states, but most people gravitate toward a specific one most of the time.

The reasonable mind is driven by logic, the emotional mind is driven by feelings, and wise mind is a middle-ground between the two. One way to strengthen the mind's ability to manage emotions is to develop a tool chest of logic activities to utilize when we are overwhelmed by our emotions to tolerate emotional distress.

Like almost every skill, logic can also be improved and developed through proper exercises and activities. Here are some of the best logic activities that will help you do just that!

Word Search, Brain Teasers (Sudoku), Card Games, Puzzles, Crossword Puzzles, Play an Instrument, Strategy Games (chess), Matching Games, Board Games, Brain Training Apps, Mechanical puzzles (Rubik's Cube), Learn a New Language.

If you would like to learn more about Dialectical Behavior Therapy:

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16/dbt.asp>

Marsha Linehan, Ph.D. is the creator of Dialectical Behavior Therapy.

You can find more information about Dr. Linehan at www.behavioraltech.org.

Interested in Suicide Prevention Training for your staff?

Contact Kimberly.spencer2@va.gov.

Kimberly Spencer, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Training Specialist

The NF/SGVHS Library hosts upcoming Florida Talks as part of the 2021 Lecture Series:

“Florida Water Stories”

Florida has had a long and difficult relationship with water, from early attempts to turn water into land to present day concerns about water quality and sea level rise. University of Florida History professor Dr. Steven Noll will discuss the history of water in Florida and look at how that history shapes the future. This free virtual event will be hosted online on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22, 2021, from 12:00 Noon–1:00 p.m. EST. Meeting link :[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/Y6K7CXWN](https://tinyurl.com/y6k7cxwn). Join by phone at 1 (404) 397-1596; Access code: 199 342 3139#.

The Library’s virtual lectures are free for everyone; no registration is required. Any questions, please contact Lisa.Huang@va.gov: 352-548-6316.



“Words of Wisdom”

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness:
Kindness in your face, Kindness in your eyes,
Kindness in your smile.

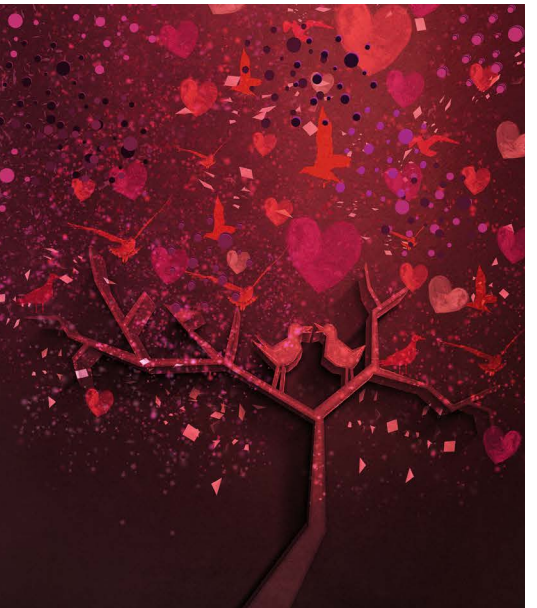
Mother Teresa



“Let Us Fall In Love Again”

Let us fall in love again
And scatter gold dust all over the world.
Let us become a new Spring
And feel the breeze drift in the heaven’s scent.
Let us dress the earth in green,
And like the sap of a young tree
Let the grace from within sustain us.
Let us carve gems out of our stony hearts
And let them light our path of Love.
The glance of love is crystal clear
And we are blessed by its light.

Rumi



CONTACTS AND WHOLE HEALTH WEBSITE

Whole Health Coaches can be reached through the main number of the Clinic or Hospital they work.

Whole Health Website: [Whole Health Home \(va.gov\)](https://www.wholehealth.va.gov)

WH Website: https://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/services/Whole_Health.asp



Contributors to the Veterans Newsletter:

Laurie Reisman, LCSW Whole Health Program Manager, NF/SG: Program Manager Message, Wild Geese Poem, T.S. Elliot quote

Bhuaneshwari Seenauth, RN PACT Care Coordinator, Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic, University Blvd:

Whole Health Surroundings; Poem: Let us fall in love again by Rumi; quote by Harriet Tubman and Stephen Gardiner;

Whole Health-Surround-ings Handouts; Resources for Homeless Veterans.

Lisa Huang, Supervisory Librarian NF/SG

Patricia Granberry, LPN Whole Health Coach, Spice, Words of Wisdom from Mother Theresa

Wendy Skinner, Certified Peer Support Specialist, PCMHI Gainesville; Surroundings

Debby D. Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach, CIH Modality; Art Therapy

Melanya Souza, Registered Dietitian, NF/SG VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co-Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center: Mexican Chocolate Avocado Recipe, Recipe Commentary on Antioxidants, Cinna-mon Herb section nutrition statement.

Kimberly D. Spencer, LCSW, Suicide Prevention DBT Wise Mind and how to manage emotions with logic activities

Chaplain Melvin Lane, Chaplain Message

Robin O'Hearn, PHD, Healthy Living Team, Jacksonville The Transformative Power of Breath

NORTH FLORIDA/SOUTH GEORGIA

VIRTUAL WHOLE HEALTH GUIDE

Updated February 2021

What is Whole Health and how can it help you?

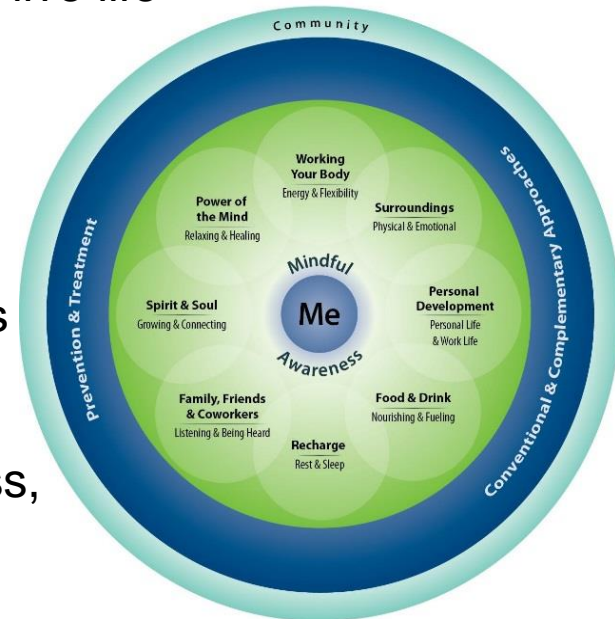
The Whole Health System is an approach to healthcare that EMPOWERS and EQUIPS you to take charge of your health, well-being, and live life to the fullest.

Whole Health recognizes you as a whole person and helps support your unique answer to the question, “What would you do if your health was the best it could be?”

Whole Health goes beyond your illness, injuries, or disabilities.

It focuses on your values and aspiration, your health and well-being, and includes self-care and complementary therapies along with your conventional medical care.

In Whole Health care, you are an active partner with your health team.



For more information on how to participate in Whole Health, contact your Primary Care Team or check out our website on the NF/SG VHA internet:
https://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/services/Whole_Health.asp

Whole Health Services Available at North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

Whole Health Orientation: Contact Patricia Granberry, WH Coach (352) 548-6000 ext.103621 or Tom O'Brien, WH Coach (904) 252-6415. Classes are alternate Mondays 1300-1400.

This Introduction to Whole Health session is designed to introduce you to the VA Whole Health approach to care.

- Our number one goal is that you accomplish the mission you create for yourself.
- Through our programs and services and, most importantly, your own strengths and abilities, we will work together in healing partnership to optimize your well-being with a focus on what is important to YOU.
- Transitioning from the Service can pose unique challenges and opportunities and we'll discuss why a whole health approach is helpful in meeting these challenges and capitalizing on your opportunities.
- We'll also describe areas of self-care and well-being that make up all the different aspects of who we are as individuals.

Whole Health Coaching: Contact your Primary Care Team for Coaching

Do You....

- Have a health goal that you would like to reach, but need some **support** in getting there?
- Feel **overwhelmed** with everything you need to do for your health?
- Need just a bit of extra **encouragement** to get you started on your life goals?

Then, Whole Health Coaching may be for you.

- Health Coaches tap into your strengths and assist you in reaching your personal health goals through individual sessions.
- Health coaching is NOT psychotherapy and does not take the place of mental health interventions.

Mind-Body Skills Groups: Contact your Primary Care Team or your Whole Health Coach and ask for Mind/Body Skills Groups led by Whole Health Coaches. This program is a series of 8 and 10-week classes focused on healing through self-awareness, self-care, and self-expression in a safe & supportive group setting. The two-hour sessions incorporate mind-body education and experiential skills including:

- Meditation
- Guided Imagery
- Breath Work
- Movement
- Journaling
- Drawing

Taking Charge of My Life and Health Classes: Contact Wendy Skinner, CPS at: (352) 281-9480 or Grady Thomas, CPS at: (352) 339-3879. This program is a series of 9-week classes with Peer Support Specialists that focuses on self-exploration to enhance and help obtain health goals. Topics covered include:

- Personal Development
- Nourishing and refueling the body
- Power of the mind
- Recharging
- Friend, Family, Co-worker relationships
- Sprit and soul

Chair Stretching Exercise Group: This group is targeted to those Veterans that have limited mobility, chronic pain, and/or have difficulty doing traditional exercises. Come and stretch your muscles to help relieve stiffness and tension, reduce pain, regain strength, relieve stress and anxiety, lower blood pressure and more. You will also learn other self-care tools such as meditation and guided imagery. Virtual Groups held Friday except for holidays at 1000-1100 & 1400-1500. Contact Whole Health Coach, Natasha Hill, at 904-732-6300 or 904-732-9898. Classes are also on Tuesdays at 1000. Contact Yvonne Crews at 904-475-5800 x6209

Virtual Mindfulness Class: This is an 8-week program held on Thursdays from 10:30-1130 am. Contact Robin O'Hearn, PhD, at 904-470-6900 x531328.

The Mindful Warrior: This virtual class is a 30-minute seated tai chi, chair yoga, mindful breathing class that is introductory, low impact, and designed for all ability levels. Consults can be placed through any VA provider.

Tai Chi: Physical Therapy is offering Tai Chi classes to assist with balance and gait issues. Consults may be placed through your providers.

Biofeedback: Gain greater awareness and control of your physiological functions to assist with heart rate regulation and improve emotional, physical, and cognitive health. Request this service through your Primary Care Physician or Whole Health Coaches.

Exercise/Movement Sessions: Aquatics Therapy, Adaptive Sports and Fitness Clinic are therapeutic offerings that require a consult-based need to participate. All of these offerings include a health promotion program and Veterans can continue to participate after therapeutic appointments have ended. Consult is placed through your providers.

Tobacco Use: Quit tobacco services are offered via telephone or VA Video Connect. Contact Erica Hoffmann, PhD, at 352-548-6000 x104745.

MOVE! Weight Management Program: This program is a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans. MOVE!'s core ideas- encouraging healthy eating behaviors, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses- are easy to follow and based on the latest nutrition science. This is not a diet and focuses on health and wellness. With the help of MOVE!, Veterans can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, improve their quality of life and even live longer! Let your Primary Care team know that you're interested.

VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen: This program serves to bridge the gap between learning about nutrition and actually putting what you learned into practice in your own life. These interactive and hands-on nutrition education classes allow Veterans to learn about nutrition, basic cooking techniques, meal planning strategy, grocery shopping and more under the guidance of a registered dietitian. For more information about the VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen program and to request a copy of the current class schedule, please contact Melanya Souza, RD, at 352-559-5961.

Diabetes and Pain Clinics: These services are accessed through Primary Care Provider.

Home Practice Exercises and Resources for Stress/Activity/Wellness: These services are offered to help cope during COVID-19. Recreation Therapy is seeing patients for therapeutic exercise via telehealth based on consulted therapeutic need. Adaptive sports include home exercise programs and all national events this season have been at home competitions. Contact your Primary Care Provider for a consult.

Acupuncture: The Anesthesia Pain Clinic in Gainesville has a full body Acupuncturist on site. You must be referred via your Primary Care Provider. Community Acupuncture referrals are also placed through your Primary Care Provider.

Battle Field Acupuncture: Auricular Acupuncture is available through many of the Patient Aligned Care Teams and Community Based Outpatient Clinics. Please discuss this option with your Primary Care Provider.

Chiropractic: Chiropractic care referrals are placed by your Primary Care Provider.

Massage: Discuss massage with your Primary Care Provider as a possible treatment option. Your Primary Care Provider can place a consult for massage in the community.

Advanced Care Planning: Advance Care Planning via Group Visits (ACP-GV) are facilitated groups that provide Veterans and their trusted others with a comfortable space to dialogue with one another about Advance Care Planning, thus increasing emotional connection and engagement with the process. ACP-GV is designed to guide you, along with your loved ones, through the process of advance healthcare planning. To learn more about advance care planning and advance directives, or to attend a group, contact Rhonda Gaddis, Advance Care Planning Program Coordinator, at 352-284-0826.

Chaplain Services: The NF/SG VHS Chaplain Service would like you to know that VA Chaplains are available to you for spiritual and pastoral support. Our desire is to care for our Veterans, their families and our staff members alike. We are here to listen and encourage, offer comfort and hope, provide prayer and emotional support, and promote a sense of peace. In the Gainesville and Lake City VA Medical Centers, you have 24/7 access to our Chapels for prayer, meditation or to simply sit in a quiet place. Our offices are located nearby if you would like to talk. Please feel free to call us or drop-in at your convenience. We have Chaplain availability at JOPC and also virtually at all other OPC's and CBOC's. We want you to know that we are here for you! Email: VHANFLChaplainService@va.gov

GV VAMC: 352-548-7427 **LKC VAMC:** 386-755-3016 x392125 **JOPC:** 904-475-6381

LGBT Support Services:

The GNV-based LGBT support group meets the third Thursday of each month from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. This is an open psychoeducational support group for LGBT men and women Veterans, facilitated by Dr. Michelle Smith and Joey Conner, LCSW.

The GNV-based Transgender support group meets the first Friday of each month from 12:30 to 2 p.m. This is an open psychoeducational support group for Veterans identifying as transgender or nonbinary, facilitated by Dr. Erica Hoffmann and Joey Conner, LCSW.

The Jacksonville-based LGBT support group meets on the first and third Mondays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. This group is facilitated by Dr. Stephanie Guedj (904-732-9818) or Dr. Becky Olson (904-732-6351).

All groups are currently meeting virtually. Please contact a facilitator for further information or if you would like to be included.

North Florida/South Georgia VHS has two LGBT Veteran Care Coordinators. Please feel free to reach out for additional information or support. Johanna (Joey) Conner : 352-376-1611 ext. 10-5452 and Michelle Smith, Ph.D.: 352-376-1611 ext. 10-5760

Employee Resources:

[Whole Health resources for employees](#) to make time for your own self-care.

Modern Psychological Network is offering Employee Assistance for professional consultation and referral for a wide spectrum of work, family and personal issues at no cost to NF/SG employees at: www.EAPhealth.com CODE: NFSGVA

Healthy Teaching Kitchen Whole Health Bite Series for Employees is offered quarterly. Contact Melanya Souza, RD, at 352-559-5961 for the schedule and invitation.



Veterans Crisis Line - We're here anytime, day or night – 24/7



If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1
- Text 838255
- Start a confidential chat
- Call TTY if you have hearing loss 1-800-799-4889
- Get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

NF/SG Veterans Health System Veteran Testimonial



"VA Whole Health Saved My Life"

For years, US Navy Veteran Sam Martino (pictured above; received care at the NF/SG VHS) struggled with deep depression and became isolated from his family and friends. View Sam tell his story [HERE](#).



VA Web-Based and Mobile Resources:

Below is some excellent information to help you connect with what matters to you.

The [Whole Health](#) website is a great place to start your Whole Health journey.

[Video: Whole Health Overview \(introduction to Whole Health\)](#)

[Video: Power of the Mind](#)

[Video: Family, Friends and Co-workers](#)

[Handout: Relationships and Health](#)

[Handout: Coping with Grief](#)

[Handout: Compassion Practice](#)

Download the [Live Whole Health app](#) to manage your Whole Health journey anytime, anyplace.

The [Personal Health Inventory](#) walks you through the eight self-care areas identified on the [Circle of Health](#) to help you determine how they affect your health. Based on your answers, this self-assessment tool will help you pinpoint areas to work on. What matters to you will shape your plan and drive your choice of [Well-being Programs](#) and clinical treatments. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/phi.asp>

#LiveWholeHealth Self-Care Blog Series – Vantage Blog on helpful self-care practices you can enjoy on demand.

My HealtheVet – My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning online Personal Health Record (PHR). This provides access to your personalized VA health care and information 24/7 through web-based tools that empower Veterans to become active partners in their health care.

Guided Meditation Podcasts - Choose from several brief podcasts designed to help settle the mind and increase a sense of relaxation and peace (located at the bottom of the page).

Self-Care Mobile Apps & Web Resources

Most of the apps feature education, self-assessment, skill development, personalized tools, multimedia demos, and links to support.

Website where these resources can be found: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-resources/MobileApps-OnlineTools.asp>

Information and Tips on utilizing the apps: https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/docs/Live-Whole-Health-App-Fact-Sheet-508_Nov2020.pdf

General site where apps can be found: <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/mental-health>

You Tubes with directions on using the apps:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3AQ_JVoBEywT5XTAC2PnHIOITmBQR7i5

For assistance in using the apps: mobilementalhealth@va.gov

Stay Quit Coach – This app provides information about smoking cessation, along with motivational messages, interactive tools and support contacts to help users stay smoke-free and cope with urges to smoke.

Information to help with sleep issues: [Path to Better Sleep](#): If you're experiencing sleep problems, you don't have to let it control your life. This course is designed to help you develop habits that promote a healthy pattern of sleep.

What matters to you will shape your plan and drive your choice of [Well-being Programs](#) and clinical treatments. The road to better health and well-being starts here, with **you**.

Discover What Matters

Be at the center of your care. Check out VA's new Video "[Discover What Matters, Live Whole Health](#)"



Self-Care Mobile Apps



www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile
MobileMentalHealth@va.gov



National Center for
PTSD
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Mobile mental health apps from the National Center for PTSD were developed for Veterans and Service members with PTSD and related concerns. **These apps can be used by anyone to support recovery**, including people who are in treatment as well as those who are not. The apps feature coping tools, educational readings, self-assessments, and links to support. There are also companion websites with extra content as noted below; these websites are independent of the apps and offer another way to access the information. All of the apps are free, secure, and easy to use.



PTSD Coach supports the self-management of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The app may be used alone or in combination with the website PTSD Coach Online (www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/).



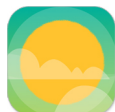
PTSD Family Coach is for partners, family members, and other loved ones of individuals who may be experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This standalone app also contains support tools for caregiving.



AIMS for Anger Management is an app for anyone with anger problems. It may be used alone, or in combination with the Anger and Irritability Management Skills online self-help course (www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims).



Couples Coach was created for partners who want to improve their relationship and explore new ways to connect.



COVID Coach was created for everyone, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Check out "30 days of self-care with COVID Coach," a guide to help make self-care a part of your daily life: <https://tinyurl.com/30daysofCOVIDCoach>



Insomnia Coach supports the self-management of insomnia. It can be used alone or in combination with the website Path to Better Sleep (www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia).



Mindfulness Coach is designed to support independent mindfulness practice. The app also contains information about mindfulness and PTSD symptoms, increasing resilience and self-awareness, improving emotional balance, and building positive skills.



VetChange is an app for anyone who is concerned about their drinking and PTSD. The app may be used alone or in combination with the VetChange website (www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change).

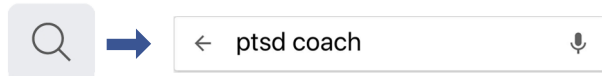
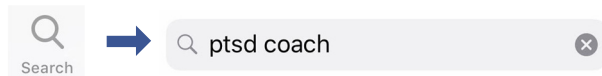
How to Download Mobile Apps

- 1 Open the App Store / Play Store where you can download a mobile app. The icon is pre-installed and can be found on the screen of your phone or in your apps list.



- 2 Once you launch the App Store / Play Store, select the search icon if you don't see the search bar. Next type "PTSD Coach" (or the name of the app you wish to download) into the search bar and then tap "Search" or search icon as needed. Once you find the app (scroll down if necessary), tap it to select it.

Note: The correct app will have the US Department of Veterans Affairs listed as the creator, and it will be free. All of our apps are free.



- 3 Download the selected app by tapping on the "Get" or "Install" button.



GET

or



INSTALL

- 4 If asked, enter your Apple or Google ID password or fingerprint.

- 5 If you remain on the same App Store screen, the "Get" or "Install" button will be replaced by an "Open" button after the download has completed. To access the app, tap this button and follow the on-screen instructions.



OPEN



OPEN

- 6 Once the app finishes downloading, it should automatically create an icon for itself on the home screen. You can tap this icon to open the app at any time without going to the App Store / Play Store again.

- 7 The first time you open the app, the Software End User License Agreement will appear. To move into the app, you need to read through this and tap the "I Accept" button at the bottom.

License agreement

express consent. You also acknowledge that it is your sole responsibility to protect and otherwise secure any information captured and stored by the software once installed on your device.



I Accept



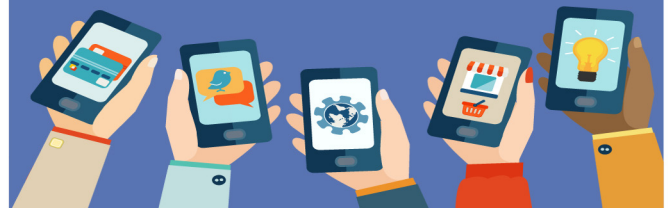
I Accept

- 8 You are ready to begin using the app.

These same instructions can be used to download any VA app.

To learn about more of our apps, please visit: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov>

Email our Mobile Apps Team with app-related questions, feedback, suggestions, or to report bugs: MobileMentalHealth@va.gov



National Center for
PTSD
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Complementary and Integrative Health:

As Part of the Whole Health approach, VA is developing policies and guidance to implement complementary and integrative health (CIH) Below are links to VA-approved complementary and integrative health approaches for treatment. Talk to your Primary Care Provider to see if evidence based research warrants a referral to any of these modalities for your treatment plan.

- [Acupuncture](#)
- [Biofeedback](#)
- [Clinical Hypnosis](#)
- [Massage Therapy](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Guided Imagery](#)
- [Tai chi/qi gong](#)
- [Yoga](#)

Yoga Experiential Resources:

Note: These resources have been identified by the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center as options for your consideration, but items in this category are not endorsed by VA.

[Veterans Yoga Project](#) - Mindful Resilience-Home Practice Library is a collection of mind-body practices to be used to further develop practices related to Breath, Meditation, Mindful Movement, Guided Rest, and Gratitude. These tools help us breathe easy, focus clearly, move freely, rest deeply, and remember what is working in our lives. As a result we become more resilient in the face of both ordinary and extraordinary challenges. In this library you will find downloadable audio files of each of the five tools of Mindful Resilience Training. We invite you to explore various practices all led by Veterans Yoga Project Ambassadors and Teachers.

[Kula For Karma](#)- The Yoga for Veterans Video Series is a 6-part guided yoga and meditation practice, designed specifically for Veterans. These 30-minute videos guide viewers through asana, adaptive yoga, restorative practice, easy flow, power yoga level I & II and meditation.

[Yoga Journal](#) - Yoga Journal offers a unique offering of free online yoga videos. These videos offer sequencing., tips and tutorials for beginners and advanced participants.

[Warriors at Ease](#)- Explore meditation, breathing techniques, iRest Yoga Nidra and more yoga. This resources offers a guided iRest Yoga Nidra session, experiential breathing techniques, and yoga demonstrations.

[Mindful Yoga Therapy](#)- Free downloads, includes a series of short breathing practices that are part of the Mindful Yoga Therapy Program and a Deep Relaxation: Yoga Nidra resource.

[Comeback Yoga](#) - Free yoga classes to help military personnel, their families and supporters develop resiliency in response to their experience.

Yoga Experiential Resources continued

Glo - Temporary free trial due to COVID19. With over 4,000 online yoga, meditation, and Pilates classes on demand, you can experience the benefits of your practice at home or on the go, on any device. You can even download your favorite classes so they're always available.

Connected Warriors Virtual Yoga Classes - Join live and recorded zoom yoga classes, or explore posted YouTube virtual yoga classes made possible by the Connected Warriors.

Yoga With Adriene: Free Yoga class calendar that redirects you to You Tube for a daily practice: <https://yogawithadriene.com/calendar/>



Tai Chi Experiential Resources:

Note: These resources have been identified by the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center as options for your consideration, but items in this category are not endorsed by VA.

7 Minute Chi - 7 Minute Chi allows you to move and meditate at the same time with simple moves from Tai Chi and Qi Gong. You will learn to decompress and energize with moving meditation. The exercises are simple moves performed by Master Li.

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Standing - Tai Chi Fundamentals is a YouTube Experiential and Informative Video that shares the basic moves involved in Tai Chi. The Basic Moves train posture, balance and coordination.

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Adaptive with Walking/Walker Aid - Tai Chi Fundamentals is a YouTube Experiential and Informative Video that shares the basic moves involved in Tai Chi. The Basic Moves train posture, balance and coordination for a participant who uses a medical walker or walking aid.

Tai Chi with Tricia Yu - Tai Chi with Tricia Yu offers a YouTube Channel consisting of multiple videos and demonstrations for an overall Tai Chi experience.

Freedom Qi Gong - An online course with daily follow-along videos that teach beginners simple Qi Gong techniques to combat stress and help the body heal

Maahaa-Rooh Energetic and Internal Systems (maahaah-rooh.com) - Experience the knowledge and wisdom of 50+ years of teachings with Grand Master Dr. Shakoor. The video section has Maahaah-Yoga, Tai Chi Chuan, Qi Gong Aiki-Jitsu and other various videos as well as 3 downloadable books called Health Healing and Happiness 1, 2 & 3

Biofeedback Experiential Resources:

Note: These resources have been identified by the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center as options for your consideration, but items in this category are not endorsed by VA.

EliteHRV - HRV is the best non-invasive measure of the Autonomic Nervous System, the main controller of health and performance functions. HRV is a direct link to your Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) and can therefore be used to gain insights into your nervous system, stress and recovery activity.

HeartMath - The three-hour H.E.A.R.T. online program, free for veterans, military personnel and their families is presented by professional trainers (both veterans) who provide comprehensive instruction in HeartMath's research-based self-regulation techniques and technology. Learn to manage emotions, build resilience and improve performance, mental focus and decision-making. The tools taught in H.E.A.R.T. have proven to be effective in helping individuals manage many challenges of transition as well as issues such as poor sleep and hyper-arousal. Veterans tell how HeartMath helped them.

Meditation/Guided Imagery Experiential Resources:

Note: These resources have been identified by the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center as options for your consideration, but items in this category are not endorsed by VA.

Health Journeys Guided Imagery Audio Library - Guided imagery and meditation have been shown to reduce stress, improve sleep, reduce pain, generate confidence, enhance focus and, maybe best of all, clear the way for finding your own deep inner peace. The page streams a variety of brief, effective meditations by leading practitioners in the mind-body field. Find your favorites, listen regularly, and enjoy the benefits. Invite your family to use the page, too. It's available 24/7 and it's free.

Meditation Oasis Podcasts - The Meditation Oasis® Podcast features guided meditations, instructions for meditation, and music for meditation. You can listen to it at iTunes or Google Play or by clicking on the play buttons below. Episodes are listed from the oldest to the most recent. Tap on the green button to view recent podcasts.

Chris Germer - Chris Germer is a clinical psychologist, meditation practitioner, author, and teacher of mindfulness and compassion in psychotherapy and everyday life. Co-developer of the Mindful Self-Compassion training program. Feel free to download the following meditations for your personal use. They are intended to guide you through the first phase of mindful self-compassion training. The meditations are primarily instructional in nature and briefer than most meditation sessions.

Military Meditation Coach App/Podcast - Learn and practice meditation techniques for the military and veteran community during this mindfulness podcast hosted experts in the Military Health System, the Defense Health Agency, and the Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control.

Comfort Talk Pro App - Temporary free trial due to COVID19. The Comfort Talk mobile app can help you relax, feel confident, explore being more peaceful, and focus on a sense of well-being and ease.

Fitness

Note: These resources have been identified by the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center as options for your consideration, but items in this category are not endorsed by VA.

Virtual Fitness Class (VFC) www.teamvfc.com – Veteran operated, faith based virtual platform that inspires people to develop habits into systems and systems into success physically, spiritually and mentally as one through love. VFC believes strong bodies and minds are created through the power of prayer, community, and systems. Each 45-90 min VFC class boosts your energy, strengthens your muscles and restores your mind body connection through a combination of dynamic stretching, functional movement and prayer.

Other Resources

Red Cross COVID-19 Isolation Continues Military Caregiver Network Grows (redcross.org) Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN). The mission of the MVCN is to provide our nation's military and veteran caregivers of all eras with peer support and resources to reduce isolation and increase connection, engagement, knowledge, skills, and hope. Visit the site at milvetcaregivernetwork.org/

The Clinical Contact Center is a service providing 24/7, telephone, virtual care and support to Veterans enrolled for VA Health Care in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. You can call **1-877-741-3400** around the clock to get your health questions or concerns answered. Services include general administrative support, nurse advice and triage, virtual visits with a doctor or nurse practitioner via telephone or VA Video Connect.

The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV) provides free, confidential support for Veterans and their family members and friends who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Veterans can either call or chat online with the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans where trained counselors are ready to talk confidentially 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Dial **1 (877) 424-3838** or visit <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/> to receive confidential support. This site also provides information for food.